DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 679 EA 012 256

TITLE	Staff Development. Research Action Brief Number 10.
INSTITUTION	Oregon Univ., Eugene. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Mar 80
CONTRACT	400-78-0007
NOTE	5p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403 (free)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Responsibility; Administrator Role; Demonstrations (Educational); *Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Individualized Instruction; *Inservice Teacher Education; Literature Reviews; Principals; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Participation; Teachers

ABSTRACT

Although much research on staff development is unenlightening for school administrators, a few studies have useful findings. The four studies reviewed here suggest a number of guidelines for choosing staff development programs. The best programs appear to be those that do not utilize lectures but instead emphasize demonstrations and opportunities for teachers to practice new skills and receive feedback. Programs should be individualized to address the requirements of each participant and relate to on-the-job needs. Research indicates that programs are better if they are ongoing, school-based projects rather than short workshops or courses. Observations of other teachers who have mastered the innovation are helpful. Paying teachers to participate in staff development is not particularly useful. Principals ought to be knowledgeable about and supportive of the program but should not have full responsibility for planning programs. Teachers want, and should be given, ongoing participation in project decisions. Regular, relevant project meetings are important. Research results were ambiguous about whether local resource personnel or outside consultants make better trainers. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED189679

ERIC
CLEARINGHOUSE
ON EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH ACTION BRIEF

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Number 10 March 1980

Staff Development

Educators looking for a good staff development program are forced to choose among literally thousands of very different programs. The programs range from traditional university courses to school-based workshops to overall school improvement programs. Some programs are condensed into a day or a week of intense activity, and others are ongoing, with activities sprinkled throughout the year. Trainers in some schools are local personnel, whereas other schools bring in outside consultants.

Some staff development programs use lectures, and others use demonstrations and simulated trials. Some orient everyone toward the same general objectives; others have individualized goals. Programs may be planned by teachers or by administrators or by a combination of both.

Which programs are best? What is the best way to help teachers develop the new skills, knowledge, and attitudes they need and want? How can administrators help teachers in their professional growth?

Unfortunately, going to the literature on staff development is not much help. A majority of publications are evaluation reports rather than real research. In these reports, usually administrators or teachers write up a program used in their school. It is almost always a successful program since no one likes to publish failures. Measurement techniques are often subjective opinions or tests made up by the participants. Results sections report fuzzy findings like "teachers felt the program helped them improve their classroom questioning techniques" or "administrators are proud of the noticeable improvement in teacher attitudes." Control groups are rarely used because no one wants to be left out of the exciting new program.

Smart administrators and teachers look at these reports with more than a little skepticism. Are they really so successful? Is a program that was successful in another school certain to be successful in their own school? What are the ingredients of a successful staff development program?

Effective Techniques

Fortunately, hidden among the many dubious reports on staff development programs are a few useful studies. One of these, a four-year, two-phase study by the Rand Corporation culminating in 1975 provided some insights into the characteristics of effective staff development. Not initially focused on staff development, the study looked at approximately three hundred educational innovations to determine why some innovative projects succeed and others fail. The researchers found that certain staff development strategies had great impact on the success of these innovations.

According to Berman and McLaughlin, researchers surveyed 852 administrators and 689 teachers and conducted field studies that allowed them to observe projects in operation. Two years after the initial research, they resurveyed one hundred projects and revisited eighteen to determine which reforms had long-lasting effects.

The researchers discovered that several aspects of teacher staff development activities had "major, positive

Each *Research Action Brief* reports the findings of significant empirical research studies on a topic in educational management. From these findings implications are drawn for the operation of today's schools, thus serving as a guide for enlightened administrative action.

This *Research Action Brief* was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for distribution by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

EA 012 256

effects" on project outcomes and continuation. One was training that was "concrete, on-going, and teacher specific." "Hands-on" training that allowed teachers to try out new techniques and ask for the kind of assistance they needed when they needed it was most likely to lead to successful programs. The best training addressed the specific needs of each individual teacher.

In contrast, one-shot preimplementation training was usually not helpful to project staff. Because training and assistance needs of teachers changed over time, even if training was relevant it was not meaningful when presented before the program had really begun.

Because of the need for ongoing assistance, local resource personnel who could provide "on-call" advice were more effective than outside consultants whose advice was seen as too "general, untimely, and irrelevant."

Observation of projects in other classrooms or districts was also found to be a useful component of staff development because teachers could receive advice and encouragement from peers who had had a successful experience.

A rather surprising finding was that giving extra pay for training had either insignificant or negative effects. Apparently, teachers participate in training programs because they believe they will help them to become better teachers and not because of extrinsic rewards.

Another conclusion of the researchers was that principal participation in the training was vital. It appeared that principals needed to gain knowledge that would enable them to help teachers with program objectives and to show teachers that their efforts were supported.

In another report on the Rand study, McLaughlin and Marsh highlighted an additional conclusion. These authors noted that "staff support" activities were extremely important in enabling teachers to carry on successful programs. "Skill-specific" training was not enough. One component of staff support activities was regular project meetings where teachers could discuss and work on problems. Although these meetings became counterproductive if they degenerated into mere recordkeeping or concentrated on details of project administration, they were found to be extremely helpful if teachers could use them to work together to solve immediate problems.

Other staff support activities were teacher participation in project decisions and the classroom assistance by resource personnel discussed by Berman and McLaughlin. These activities appeared to be necessary to affect teachers' attitudes and inspire commitment to the program. McLaughlin and Marsh found that without such support activities the effects of training faded and no long-lasting changes in teachers occurred.

Effective Program Management

Another approach to determining what makes teacher inservice effective was taken by Lawrence. He looked at ninety-seven studies or evaluation reports of inservice education and generalized about successful programs. Although no single one of these reports is enough basis for choosing a program, the programs are more enlightening when looked at as a group. When the ninety-seven programs are compared, characteristics of effective programs can be separated from those of less effective programs, and aspects that are repeatedly a part of effective programs can be spotted easily.

Some of the most interesting of Lawrence's findings are clustered around the management of inservice education. Several of these findings are strikingly similar to those of the Rand study. Lawrence found that education programs that have individualized activities are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programs that have common activi-

References

1. Berman, Paul, and McLaughlin, Milbrey Wallin. *Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Volume VIII: Implementing and Sustaining Innovations.* Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1978. 58 pages. ED 159 289.

2. Johnston, Gladys Styles, and Yeakey, Carol Camp. "Administrators' and Teachers' Preferences for Staff Development." *Planning and Changing,* 8, 4 (Winter 1977), pp. 230-38. EJ 175 621.

3. Joyce, Bruce R.; McNair, Kathleen M.; Diaz, Richard; and McKibbin, Michael D. *Interviews: Perceptions of Professionals and Policy Makers.* Stanford, California: Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, Stanford University, 1976. 135 pages. ED 142 546.

4. Lawrence, Gordon. *Patterns of Effective Inservice Education: A State of the Art Summary of Research on Materials and Procedures for Changing Teacher Behaviors in Inservice Education.* Tallahassee, Florida: Florida State Department of Education, 1974. 46 pages. ED 176 424.

5. McLaughlin, Milbrey Wallin, and Marsh, David D. "Staff Development and School Change." *Teachers College Record,* 80, 1 (September 1978), pp. 69-94. EJ 195 497.

Order copies of numbered items from sources below. Do not order from the Clearinghouse.

1. EDRS. Specify ED 159 289. MF $0.83 PC $4.82.
2. Contact Dept. of Educational Administration, Illinois State Univ., Normal, IL 61761. $2.50.
3. EDRS. Specify ED 142 546. MF $0.83 PC $9.32.
4. EDRS. Specify ED 176 424. MF $0.83 PC $3.32.
5. Contact Teachers College, Columbia Univ., 525 W. 120th St., New York, NY 10027. $4.00.

ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA 22210 in (MF) microfiche (up to 96 pages per fiche) or (PC) paper copy reproduction. Payment must accompany orders of less than $10.00. Include shipping charges as follows:

1st class: (MF only) 1-3, $0.15; 4-8, $0.28; 9-14, $0.41; 15-18, $0.54; 19-21, $0.80; 22-27, $0.93; 28-32, $1.06.

UPS: 33-75 MF or 1-75 PC pages through 525, $0.31; 526-1500 MF or PC pages not to exceed $3.33-$7.08.

ties for all participants. This is similar to Berman and McLaughlin's findings that the most successful strategies are "teacher specific."

Another finding to echo the Rand study was the finding that programs that emphasize demonstrations, trials, and feedback are more effective than those in which teachers merely absorb ideas for a future time. This sounds a lot like Berman and McLaughlin's conclusions about "concrete ongoing," "hands-on" programs.

Lawrence also noted that school-based programs conducted by local supervisors or administrators appear more effective than those run by outside personnel. Again, one is reminded of Berman and McLaughlin, this time of their findings about the superiority of local resource personnel to consultants.

Lawrence found that teacher behavior was affected by both school-based and college-based programs, but that the school-based programs influenced more complex kinds of behaviors such as attitudes. Apparently programs at the school site are capable of doing more than conveying information; they are capable of changing beliefs as well. This finding is especially interesting when coupled with McLaughlin and Marsh's finding that just offering new skills is not enough to accomplish successful educational innovations in schools. They found that complex changes involving attitudes and motivation were very necessary if real changes were to be made in the instructional program.

Finally, Lawrence discovered that programs in which teachers participate as helpers and planners have greater success in accomplishing their objectives than do programs conducted by college or other outside personnel without teacher assistance.

Preferred Programs

When selecting an inservice program it is also helpful to know the characteristics of programs preferred by teachers and administrators. Joyce and his colleagues did some preliminary investigating into teacher and administrator preferences for inservice teacher education (ISTE). The researchers conducted loosely structured interviews with 1,016 educators, including teachers, administrators, and college faculty. Although the interviewees were not a random sample and the authors stress that interviews were exploratory and intended to be merely preliminary to a later survey, they are confident that the findings "identify fairly exhaustively the perceived issues, problems, and opportunities for constructive change in ISTE."

Joyce and his associates uncovered a number of concerns and opinions regarding inservice education, some of which confirm the studies discussed earlier. The researchers discovered among all types of respondents a desire for teachers to have more responsibility for the content of inservice programs. Few respondents wanted administrators or college teachers (those traditionally responsible for program content) to have *sole* responsibility for determining programs.

The researchers also found that all categories of interviewees were concerned about the need to relate training to local and on-the-job needs and for teachers to receive training when they need and want it. This "timeliness" need was especially crucial.

There was less agreement on who should be responsible for the organization of inservice programs. In fact, each group questioned (teachers, administrators, college faculty) favored themselves as the responsible agents.

A final finding presents a contrast to findings of the Lawrence study. When asked about preferences for trainers, only 2 percent of the respondents preferred local education agency personnel (including administrators and curriculum supervisors) as trainers, while 15 percent chose consultants and 20 percent chose college faculty. This contrasts with Lawrence's findings about the desirability of using local administrators rather than outside consultants. Why the trainers who would be the most useful for teachers are those the least desired by the educators interviewed is something of a puzzle.

Joyce and his colleagues hypothesized that teachers did not want to have their evaluators as their trainers. Perhaps before teachers will feel comfortable with local administrative personnel as trainers, the functions of evaluation and training will have to be more clearly separated.

In another, smaller survey, Johnston and Yeakey questioned 313 teachers and twenty-three administrators from seventeen New Jersey elementary schools. The hypothesis they tested was that administrators differ significantly from teachers in preferred content, methods, and planning strategies of teacher staff development programs.

When preferences for content were compared, Johnston and Yeakey found that there was indeed significant disagreement. For instance, urban administrators ranked community relations as a topic they would most prefer for teacher staff development programs, whereas teachers ranked it as a least preferred topic. Similar differences were found on other topics. Johnston and Yeakey believed that administrators were interested in those topics most closely associated with their role and that teachers were interested in those relevant to their own role.

The researchers also found that administrators and teachers are not in agreement as to who should plan and conduct staff development workshops. Administrators prefer that they themselves plan the workshops, but teachers prefer teacher and committee planning.

Johnston and Yeakey concluded that the most effective staff development workshops would be those planned jointly by teachers and administrators. They believe teachers need a chance to define their own problems and needs. They put it, "If this is done, administrators will find that teachers are more supportive of staff development programs, and in turn the programs are more effective."

Implications

These findings suggest a number of guidelines for choosing staff development programs. First, the persons responsible for programs would do well to choose those that are concrete and aimed at specific skills rather than theoretical. These programs should emphasize demonstrations and opportunities for staff to practice the new skills and receive feedback. Lectures alone promise to be less effective.

Both Lawrence and the Rand study indicate that

programs should be individualized to address the requirements of each participant and relate to on-the-job needs. Programs that offer the same results to everyone will be less effective.

The best programs appear to be ongoing—stretching throughout the school year—rather than a short workshop or course that is soon forgotten. Programs are more successful at changing attitudes if they occur at school rather than elsewhere. Observation of other teachers who have mastered and are practicing the skills being taught appears to be useful.

Paying teachers to participate in programs appears to be less useful than providing programs that appeal to teachers' motivation to improve their abilities and become better teachers.

Findings of the Rand study indicate that principals ought to be a part of staff development programs and show their knowledge and support of the program. Yet all three of the other studies emphasize that administrators should not have *full* responsibility for planning programs. Teachers want and need to help choose program content and to participate as helpers and planners. Administrators who take full charge without help from the staff will find their programs sadly lacking in support. Administrators who ignore the program will suffer the same fate.

Furthermore, as the Rand study and the Lawrence study both indicate, teachers want ongoing participation in project decisions, and programs that provide such participation are more successful. Regular project meetings are important, not, as McLaughlin and Marsh emphasize, for administrative details but for discussion of real immediate problems and proposed solutions.

These findings are all clearer and less ambiguous than the findings concerning who should be the trainers in staff development activities. Both the Rand and Lawrence studies indicate that local resource personnel make better trainers than do outside consultants. Yet Joyce and his research team found that almost no one wanted local administrative personnel for trainers. Perhaps school staff members rather than administrators should be recruited for use as trainers. Perhaps changes in evaluation procedures can be made to make teachers feel less threatened by the idea of their supervisors being used as trainers.

The same themes appear again and again in these four studies: a need for more teacher participation in choosing and running staff development programs; a call for less theory and intellectualizing and more practice and participation in program activities; and a need for training that addresses everyday on-the-job needs and that is individualized to meet the needs of each participant. These are the lessons of research on staff development.

This publication was prepared with funding from the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education under contract no. 400-78-0007. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of NIE or the Department of Education.

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system operated by the National Institute of Education. ERIC serves educators by disseminating research results and other resource information that can be used in developing more effective educational programs. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, one of several such units in the system, was established at the University of Oregon in 1966. The Clearinghouse and its companion units process research reports and journal articles for announcement in ERIC's index and abstract bulletins.

Research reports are announced in Resources in Education (RIE), available in many libraries and by subscription for $42.70 a year from the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Journal articles are announced in Current Index to Journals in Education. CIJE is also available in many libraries and can be ordered for $80 a year from Oryx Press, 2214 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

Besides processing documents and journal articles, the Clearinghouse prepares bibliographies, literature reviews, monographs, and other interpretive research studies on topics in its educational area.

Prior to publication, this manuscript was submitted to the National Association of Secondary School Principals for critical review and determination of professional competence. The publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the NASSP.

EA 012 256

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403